

Diet

(Alimentation)

A healthy balanced diet is essential at every stage of your cancer treatment. Eating well will give your energy and help you feel better as well as strengthening your body.

Sometimes, **the side effects of treatments** (nausea, vomiting, irritation of the mucosa, constipation, diarrhoea) **make it difficult to eat well**. The senses of taste and smell are altered and may even disappear. Appetite and the desire to eat may be reduced. **Remember that these dietary problems are only temporary.**

During your treatment, it is important to maintain a good body balance. This balance can be assessed by monitoring your weight. It is absolutely essential to watch your weight. Use your weight from before your illness as a focal point.

Weigh yourself twice a week, at the same time, dressed in the same way every time.
If you lose weight:

- add soups, purees, rich desserts etc. to your diet;
- consult your doctor who will prescribe dietary supplements.



Never wait until you have lost a lot of weight. If you have lost 10% of your weight (for example, if you weighed 50 kg and you have lost 5), you are malnourished and need to see your doctor.

You may also gain weight during your treatments: lack of physical activity due to the need to rest, snacking between meals owing to fatigue, nausea and anxiety and taking medication are potential factors.

Remember every day that, for the most balanced diet, it is recommended to:

- Have at least 3 meals a day;
- Don't always eat the same thing: a varied diet prevents deficiencies;
- Chew well;
- Make your meal last at least 20 minutes;
- Limit foods with high fat and sugar content;
- Drink enough water during the day.

Some tips to maintain a balanced diet in spite of fatigue:

- Ask your family to help if possible;
 - When fatigue is severe and you are not hungry at mealtimes, spread your meals throughout the day;
 - Plan to cook in larger quantities and freeze small portions you can use when you are too tired to cook or just don't feel like it;
 - Keep a small reserve of products you like so that you can eat them when you feel hungry, without having to cook;
 - Use ready-prepared or frozen meals;
 - Don't hesitate to ask for help and contact home help associations for preparing your meals.
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Some advice if you lose weight:

- Eat protein-rich foods, such as meat, fish, eggs, cheese, dairy products. If you don't feel like eating meat, it can be replaced with fish, eggs or dairy products;
- Eat high-carbohydrate foods such as cereals, pasta, fruit and vegetables, sweet drinks and honey. These are good dietary sources of energy;
- Food supplements (read to use) high in protein and calories, may be used very early, before you lose weight: ask your doctor for advice;
- Prioritise herbs and spices which give more flavour to dishes and stimulate your appetite;
- Drink at least two litres of water per day, cola-based drinks (for the nausea), soups or fruit juice, herbal teas. Liquids help the body to eliminate waste which can cause fatigue.



Don't hesitate to talk to the medical team about your dietary difficulties as early as possible, for rapid and effective treatment. The doctor can refer you to a dietician whose job is to help you find an appropriate dietary balance to help reduce your fatigue, maintain weight, support your illness better as well as the treatments, and rediscover the pleasure of eating.

